

Deaths in Guyana Threaten Sect's California Organization

By WALLACE TURNER

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SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 10 — The powerful political-religious organization that the Rev. Jim Jones built as the People's Temple seemed today to be in danger of coming apart in the aftermath of five murders at the airstrip that serves the group's agricultural colony at Jonestown, Guyana.

Services have been held at 11 A.M. each Sunday for several years at the group's meeting place, a three-story brick structure on the edge of the jungle, but there were no services today. The doors were locked, and the police were called to restrain a woman relative of one Jonestown resident.

Just after 11 A.M., Archie Barnes, a black man who identified himself as a minister, came out to the airstrip steps with two stone-faced men, one white and one black. He read a statement that said there had been no radio contact with Jonestown since yesterday morning by church groups here or in Los Angeles or Georgetown, Guyana.

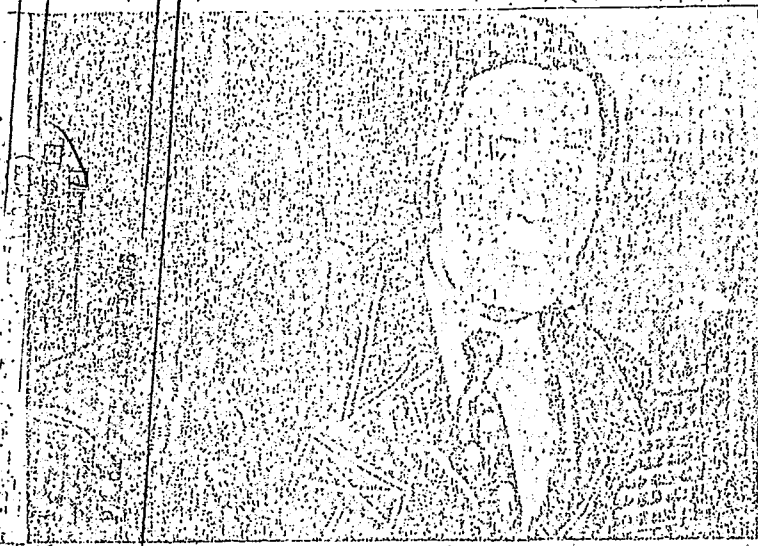
Jonestown sits in a remote area of Guyana, a nation on the northeast coast of South America whose capital is Georgetown.

Jones Is Said to Deplore Violence

Mr. Jones's statement deplored violence and expressed condolences to families of the five persons who were killed and those who were wounded in the shooting at dusk yesterday on the airstrip at Port Kaituma, Guyana.

"Rev. Jim Jones has always deplored violence," Mr. Jones said, "and whatever the circumstances of the airstrip incident it is not the kind of action anyone within the temple ever would precipitate. The statement called 'sensational and patently untrue' the State Department suggestion of mass suicide among temple members.

The People's Temple has prospered — in money, members and political influence — ever since Mr. Jones moved his flock of 100 from Indianapolis to Redwood Valley, near Ukiah, Calif., in 1965. The



Jim Jones, leader of the People's Temple, in a 1976 photograph.

temple moved here in 1971 but began to decline in the summer of 1977, when news reports critical of the temple appeared, and Mr. Jones went to Guyana.

The church work continued but the political influence declined, and large sums of money were moved into the jungle-reclamation project. Many members went there to live.

Originally From Lynn, Ind.

Membership in the temple reached a high of 10,000 in 1976, Mr. Jones said. It was predominantly black, but with large white, Asian and American Indian groups. The 47-year-old Mr. Jones, a native of Lynn, Ind., and a graduate of Butler University, said he is "all American mongrel, part Indian, part Welsh."

His political power was based on the fact that, at a nod from Mr. Jones, hundreds — even thousands — of church members turned out to campaign and vote. A man of what one official described as "hymnic charisma," Mr.

Jones was skillful in using this power to influence the power centers he needed.

For example, when four employees of a California newspaper, The Fresno Bee, were jailed in September 1976 for refusing to name the sources of news stories, busloads of People's Temple members arrived to picket the courthouse. In visits with reporters, Mr. Jones described his dedication to the principles of a free press.

He invited political and civic leaders to the church where enthusiastic crowds greeted them with apparently spontaneous displays of support. Later, disaffected members said Mr. Jones orchestrated those displays, but they did help him build a strong political base.

Complaints From Former Members

Then in the summer of 1977, New West magazine printed an attack on Mr. Jones and the People's Temple. The attack was based on statements of former members who said the pastor performed spurious

miracles that were out right trickery, that physical and mental anguish was used to enforce compliance with his orders and that members were encouraged to turn over all they owned to the temple.

Mr. Jones denied everything. The district attorney's office here could find no chargeable offense, although it closely examined many sales of homes that had been donated to the temple. Nevertheless, Mr. Jones resigned his chairmanship of the San Francisco Housing Authority, which his friend, Mayor George Moscone, had appointed him. In August 1977, he left for Guyana.

Mr. Jones's wife of 29 years, Marceline, is a nurse whom he married when he was 13 years old and she was a 22-year-old student nurse. In an interview a year ago, she recalled that when Mr. Jones was 18, Mao Tse-tung was his hero. By the time he was about 21, she said, he realized that in order to bring people out of their superstition, "you have to give them a substitute."

The substitute was religion — in which Mr. Jones did not believe, his wife said. His aim was a Marxist social group, and that was what he was building in Guyana. But Mrs. Jones insisted that her husband is a man dedicated to the welfare of his church members and mankind.

Government sources have said that about 1,000 passport applications were filed here for temple members going to Guyana. It was the welfare of these members that concerned Representative Leo J. Ryan and led him to make the inspection trip to Jonestown that ended in his death yesterday.

Relatives of some of the Jonestown residents moved warily around the temple today, talking to reporters and trying to find out what is happening in Guyana. Most were unwilling to identify themselves.

A 25-year-old black woman said her mother and sister went to Jonestown eight months ago. She had a recent letter, she said, that was signed by her mother, but was not written in her mother's handwriting. It seemed to her to have been written by someone else in order to quiet her concerns.

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